

January/February 1999

THE SYDNEY SHELLER

Newsletter of the Shell Club of Sydney
NSW Branch, The Malacological Society of Australasia Limited ACN 067 894 848

Shell Club of Sydney Mission Statement:

To appreciate, understand and preserve shells and their environment and to share this with others.

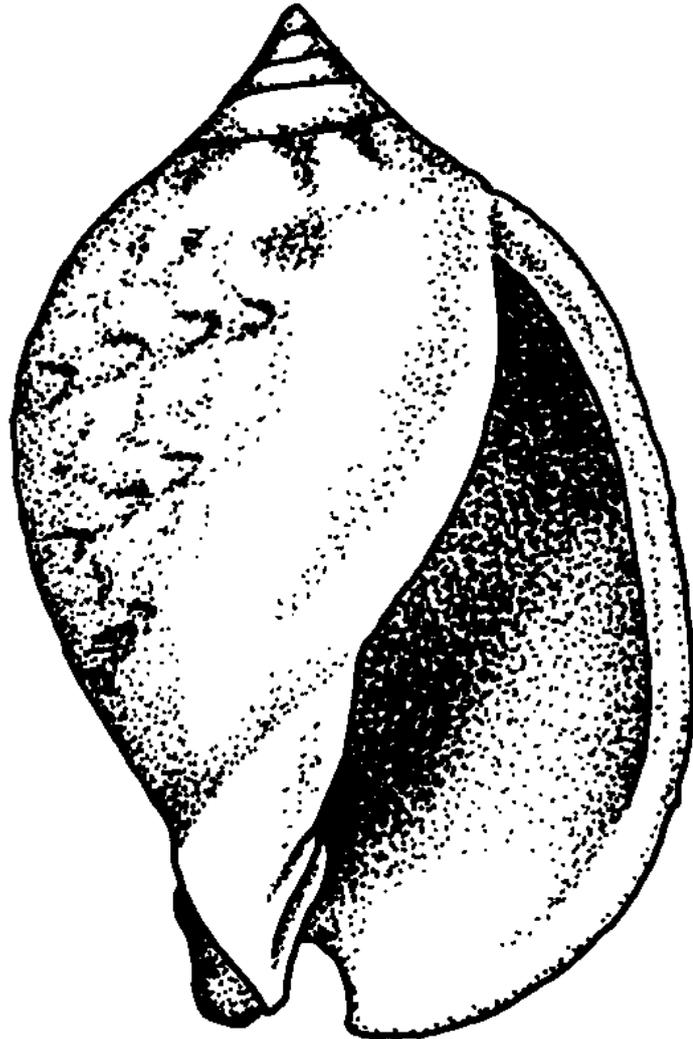
Next Meeting:

Date: 27th Mar. 99
(normally 4th Saturday)
Location: Ryde Eastwood
Leagues Club
117 Tyedale Rd
West Ryde
Time: 1.30 for 2.00pm
Seminar: Patty Jansen

Contributions:

Please send contributions to:
Steve Dean
166 Narrabeen Park Parade,
Mona Vale NSW 2103
Photos, and disc files of articles by mail, or preferably by email to steve@easy.com.au

If you cannot get your text onto disc, then **Karen Wadwell** may be prepared to type it for you - send material to:
17-9 Severn St
Maroubra NSW 2035



Phalium labiatum
Courtesy Patty Jansen

Office - Bearers:

President: Des Beechey
Vice Pres: Patty Jansen
Secretary: Chris Barnes
Treasurer: John Dunkerley
Field Trips: Ashley Miskelly
Sheller Editor: Steve Dean
Executive Management Committee:
Des Beechey, Chris Barnes, Steve Dean and Ashley Miskelly

Some of the topics inside:

- Tassie trip report
- Book review
- November minutes
- Report on Xmas party field trip
- Space for promised articles ?
- Puzzles, Gossip and Classifieds

Sept. 98 meeting presentation:

**The Karen Wadwell & Chris Barnes
Tassie Trip**

November/ December 1997

Before the trip we decided to do a little research to make sure we didn't miss the best shelling spots and had our itinerary prepared correctly (ie. make looking for shells a priority!).

We contacted well known shell author and retired school teacher, Margaret Richmond. We called Margaret and made arrangements to visit her when we reached Devonport.

Unfortunately I had already organised the itinerary with the travel agent. There were trips to wildlife parks, wineries, shopping areas and places of cultural interest planned and finally at the end of our trip we would be in Devonport, much to Chris' disgust!

Oh well... we landed in Melbourne on a 40 °C day and changed to a smaller plane for the flight to Launceston. On arrival our plan was to travel to Bicheno on the East coast via Scottsdale and hopefully see some coast on the way. Time restraints meant that we only saw a little of the beach north of Bicheno as Tassie closes down at 7.30pm so we had to reach our accommodation and have dinner before the restaurants closed.

We tried to observe the penguins purported to walk up the beach near our cabin later that night, but their clock wasn't synchronised with ours and we missed them. We did hear them going back into the water at 4.30am however!

Next day we woke to a grey wet morning, a definite contrast from the previous day. We were soon to get used to the Four seasons in one day theme. We did try to seek out some shells but to no avail.

Instead we visited Freycinet Vineyard

and sampled the excellent wines; just the thing to see us through the rest of our arduous day!

We travelled on to Coles Bay and admired the beautiful, if damp, scenery. Again, shelling was limited and uneventful.

The next day saw us travelling to Port Arthur via Richmond, where we photographed the bridge (Australia's oldest) and partook of a wonderful old fashioned morning tea (with Passionfruit sponge cake).

Port Arthur was interesting but

We returned to the mainland midafternoon and took a circuitous route back to Hobart through Cygnet and Huonville.

Leaving Hobart the following day we travelled to the Cadbury Factory at Claremont where we toured through, filling up on yummy chocolates. We finally staggered out after spending much time and money stocking up in the shop!

On we went to Strahan via Queenstown. As this route was inland, there was no opportunity for shell collecting but we bought a lovely Huon

Pine coffee table on the way and admired the fabulous Wild Rivers scenery.

Arriving in Strahan we booked on a Gordon/ Franklin river cruise. The day was wet and cool but while under way the sun obligingly made brief appearances at the most appropriate times.

Macquarie Harbour and the Hells Gates were spectacular.

The trip to Sarah Island was unforgettable due to the Historian and local Thespian who conducted a walking tour of this historic convict site.

We left Strahan for Cradle Mountain where we admired the spectacular view but as there were no shells to be seen we continued to Devonport and our appointment with Margaret.

Over afternoon tea, Margaret very kindly explained how to access her personal collecting sites. We met her cats (she dedicated her second shell book to Thomas, sadly deceased) and chatted about her shells and other prized possessions. Margaret is a lovely person, full of enthusiasm for shells and collecting but is restricted in her activities by arthritis. She still loves to have a chat and is keen to meet other shellers and discuss her hobby.

Finally we did some serious shell collecting at Anthony's Beach (Perkins Bay) west of The Nut at Stanley and found some good specimens. Eg- *Calliostoma armillatum* (Wood, 1828)

Cancellaria granosa Sowerby, 1832
Clanculus undatus (Lamarck, 1816)
Phasianella australis (Gmelin, 1791)

subdued

and we spent the afternoon scouring the Tessellated Pavement for shells. Here we had some luck, finding a specimen of

Fusus reticulatus (Adams, 1855).

On to Hobart, where we didn't do any shell collecting but managed visits to the fabulous Salamanca Markets (terrific wood products, arts, crafts and fresh produce), the Tasmanian Distillery and a trip to the top of a very windy and cold Mount Wellington.

We also paid a visit to Bruny Island. A car ferry leaves several times a day from Kettering. Again we were disappointed by the lack of shells [though we did find a *Mytilus edulis planulatus* (Lamarck, 1819) with a pearl in it] but we visited the historic Bligh Museum and had another lovely morning tea at Adventure Bay.

We toured the lovely wineries on the Tamar River near Launceston and spent a couple of days there before flying to King Island.

This magical jewel of an island in Bass Strait was to be the site of the best shell collecting of the entire trip. The scenery was breathtaking and the fabulous dairy produce was almost worth the trip alone.

The owner of the villa we stayed in went out of his way to see that we enjoyed our stay and got to see all the sights. He also organised an excursion to Grassy Harbour near the old Scheelite (tungsten) mine to view the Little Penguins returning home at dusk. This was very successful as over two hundred hopped over rocks within centimetres of us. At the same time Mutton birds swooped over head, returning to their burrows also.

The best shelling was to be found at Naracoopa Beach on the east side of the island. Among the debris of seaweed etc were some fine shell specimens just waiting to be picked out of the flotsam and jetsam of the high tide mark. Eg- *Astele subcarinatum* (Swainson, 1854)

Cypraea angustata Gmelin, 1791



Cypraea comptoni Gray, 1847



Cypraea piperita Gray, 1825



Clanculus limbatus (Quoy & Gaimard, 1834)

Sassia eburnea (Reeve, 1844)

Sassia verrucosa (Reeve, 1844)

Sadly our stay on King Island was way too short and we headed home vowing to return one day for a much longer visit.

Note: Membership of the NSW branch of the Malacological society costs \$15 annually. The Feb 27th meeting decided to change to calendar years and that the \$15 covers individuals or families. Since membership fees were not collected July last year when due everyone has had six months free. It is therefore due now for 1999, and will be due again in December for 2000.

To be a branch member, you also need to be a member of the national body. National membership is invoiced annually around March each year, directly with the national body, not through the branch.

Book Review

**Indo-West Pacific
Ranellidae, Bursidae and
Personidae
(Mollusca: Gastropoda)
A monograph of the New
Caledonian fauna and
revisions of related taxa**

by Alan G. Beu

**Mémoires du Muséum National
d'Histoire Naturelle Vol. 178,
Résultats des Campagnes
MUSORSTROM 19**

**October 1998, 255 p., hard cover, 70
plates, 4 colour plates, 220 x 277
mm, ISBN 2 85653 517 8**

A rather daunting title adorns this very new publication, volume 178 of the Memoirs of the French Natural History Museum in Paris, or vol. 19 of the MUSORSTROM project, which describes many aspects of the sea life around the French colony of New Caledonia. Add to this Alan Beu, a New Zealander, who is considered the world leading expert on Ranellidae, Bursidae and Personidae, and the only French you will see in this book is in the Summary.

This is a scientific publication that is most interesting to collectors of this family. Alan describes seventy-three species from more than 1000 collecting stations around New Caledonia, the Loyalty Islands, Coral Sea and New Hebrides Archipelago. He re-arranges a few genera, illustrates a lot of type material and describes a few new species. Of course most of the species in the Ranellidae, Bursidae and Personidae have very wide distribution ranges and thus many species described here can be found in the entire Indo-Pacific region, and even beyond.

As in scientific publications, the species are described in the finest detail, with information on the whereabouts of type material included. There is a very useful "remarks" section for each species, where the comparisons are made, and past taxonomy discussed. Of course a full synonymy is given as well.

Surprisingly for a scientific text, there is no information on the living animal, or the radula. All descriptions are based on shell characters alone. I think this is a pity because many Ranellids have interesting

habits and brightly coloured animals. Even if this type of information was considered outside the scope of the book, I feel that there should have been an explanation as to why this was done.

Each species is profusely illustrated. There are 70 (!) plates, four of which are in colour; the rest are in black and white, but all are of outstanding quality. The smaller species and protoconchs are illustrated with SEM photographs.

At the end of the book there is a list of references longer than I have ever seen in a work like this. There is also an index, and a list with exact localities of the collecting stations.

The book is in hard cover and looks quite pretty. Some may find the type rather small, but this, too, is typical for scientific publications.

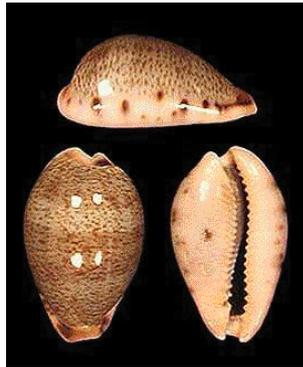
It is not a book for beginners, but collectors of Ranellidae, Personidae and Bursidae, and those interested in the larger shells of the Indo-Pacific region will find this an invaluable publication to add to their library.

A man runs into the vet's office carrying his dog, screaming for help. The vet rushes him back to an examination room and has him put his dog down on the examination table. The vet examines the still, limp body and after a few moments tells the man that his dog, regrettable, is dead. The man, clearly agitated and not willing to accept this, demands a second opinion. The vet goes into the back room and comes out with a cat and puts the cat down next to the dog's body. The cat sniffs the body, walks from head to tail poking and sniffing the dog's body and finally looks at the vet and meows. The vet looks at the man and says, "I'm sorry, but the cat thinks that your dog is dead too." The man is still unwilling to accept that his dog is dead. The vet brings in a black Labrador. The lab sniffs the body, walks from head to tail, and finally looks at the vet and barks. The vet looks at the man and says, "I'm sorry, but the lab thinks your dog is dead too." The man, finally resigned to the diagnosis, thanks the vet and asks how much he owes. The vet answers, "\$650." "\$650 to tell me my dog is dead?" exclaimed the man.... "Well," the vet replies, "I would only have charged you \$50 for my initial diagnosis. The additional \$600 was for the cat scan and lab tests."

Minutes of The NSW Branch of the Malacological Society of Australasia Limited ACN 067 894 848 held in the Rooms of the RZS at Taronga Zoo on 28/11/98.

The meeting was opened by D. Beechey at 2.01pm. Des extended a warm welcome to Keith Dean and Noel & Maureen Anderson. Apologies were received from I. Myers, E. Uhle, F. M^cCamley and standing apologies.

New Shell Acquisitions A. Miskelly reported on some great finds from around Sydney. Ashley collected *Cassis thomsoni* (Brazier, 1875) dived at La Perouse, Botany Bay. A specimen of *Cypraea xanthadon* Sowerby, 1822



and a near perfect specimen of *Chicoreus denudatus* (Perry, 1811) were dived off Vaucluse, Sydney Harbour.

R. Moylan reported on some new shells acquired from New Caledonia, including: *Conus lienardi* Bernardi & Crosse, 1861, which is endemic to the region.

New Items P. Jansen gave an impromptu review of a monograph by Alan Beu titled **Indo West Pacific Ranellidae, Bursidae & Personidae**. Patty described the book as scientific. The work is priced at \$125.00. S. Clark reported on a PhD study by Tan form Singapore. The study included Muricidae and Thaidinae, their distribution across Northern Australia from Port Hedland to Darwin. The study considered characteristics such as egg shape, size and morphology.

Field Trip Reports M. Keats reported on a brief working trip to Tasmania. He visited Eagle Hawk Neck and beach collected some 200 shell species. Michael also mentioned his good fortune at being able to acquire a

Collection of some 500 species from Trigs Beach at Scarborough (near Perth) in W. A., that had been collected over a number of years with the aid of mixed currents.

C. Barnes reported on a visit to Lennox Head on the NSW north coast, where he collected a number of Cypraeidae species. Chris also mentioned that Little Bay in Sydney was a productive spot for shellers much closer to home.

R. Moylan discussed the proposed Solomon Islands trip (August - September???) reporting that airfares Syd/Bris/Honiara were \$961.40 pp return. Ron said that there would be room for approximately 8-10 people in the accommodation he currently had under way.

General Business K. Wadwell reported that she had contacted Dr Peter Duncan (editor Australian Shell News) to keep abreast of branch happenings.

It was decided after some discussion and a vote to hold the annual Christmas meeting at Yarra Bay, as explained below.

A decision on our new meeting place was finally made after a lengthy discussion and a show of hands. The options were Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club, The Australian Museum and the Baptist Church Hall at Mosman. The decision was made in favour of RELC (9/3/1) as expenses and parking availability were a major consideration. Letter from Con Moutoudis, sending his best wishes.

M. Keats reported that Fisheries are decentralising their operations. Cronulla will remain Head Office and there will be various field centres, at places like Port Stephens. The Common Seashells of Sydney poster is being advertised in their newsletter.

It was reported that the Melbourne Shell Show is being held over the weekend of the 24th, 25th and 26th of April 1999.

Presentations M. Keats gave a short presentation on the Family Bursidae, using diagrams and drawings on the overhead projector.

Next Meeting Field trip to Yarra Bay (Botany Bay) then on to Little Bay (via Prince Henry Hospital) Saturday 12 December, at 12 noon.

Meeting closed at 3.28pm.
C. Barnes, Secretary

The 1998 Christmas Picnic to Yarra Bay and Little Bay

By Chris Barnes

The picnic day 12/12/1998 at 12:00 noon was selected by vote at the previous monthly meeting; the tide timing was completely inappropriate for shell collecting (a matter which I can only accept half the blame). Despite this, it was a great day for a picnic, the sun was shining and the birds were singing though it was a little breezy.

The plan was to meet at Yarra Bay for a picnic and then head over to Little Bay to explore and examine the local mollusc population. Karen and myself met Michael and Jenny Keats first and we took up a position at one of the covered bench tables. Patty Jansen and daughters were next to appear, followed closely by Steve, Vicky and their son.

Once lunch was completed and a few of our party had explored and paddled in Yarra Bay, it was decided to head over to Little Bay for more of the same and to see if any others had turned up there. On arrival we met Ashley Miskelly and Ernie Uhle with a young diving friend. They had been diving at La Perouse earlier in the day and had a number of unusual shell specimens to show the group. Stephanie Clark also arrived just in time to assist in identifying some of the day's more interesting finds.

Although the tide was not conducive to collecting, the weather was great and a number of people braved the surf. Steve's son was stung by a "Blue Bottle". Ashley came to the rescue with some ointment and all was well again.

By about 3.30pm everyone had had enough for the day and it was time to head home. A couple of people suggested to me that Little Bay was quite beautiful and with an appropriate tide would be a good shelling spot.

Boreotrophon alaskanus



This space has been reserved for the promised articles from members, yet to arrive.



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**Members News, &
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Wanted contributions to this classified
section of the sheller. Please get
contributions to Steve Dean or Karen
Wadwell. (See front cover for contact
details)

Wanted gossip for this section of the
sheller. Please get contributions to
Steve Dean or Karen Wadwell.

Patty advised there were no new
books in January, but that we are all
awaiting the upcoming publication of
'Revision of the Cymbiola pulchra
complex of Eastern Australia' by Allan
Limpus and Patrice Bail. Apparently
they have been working on this for
about 6 years. The book should be out
by the beginning of February. Patty
advises she won't have any until at
least March.

The board of Ryde Eastwood Leagues
Club has confirmed our permanent
booking, at the right price. However we

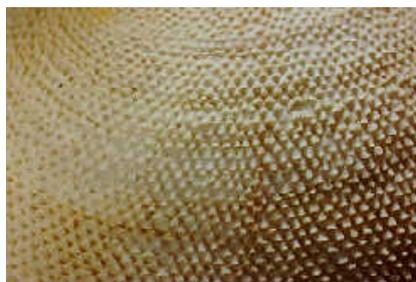
won't always be in the same meeting
room.

Two atoms are walking down the
street and they run into each other.
One says to the other, "Are you all
right?" "No, I lost an electron!" "Are
you sure?" "Yeah, I'm positive!"

A neutron goes into a bar and asks the
bartender, "How much for a beer?"
The bartender replies, "For you, no
charge."

Guess what shell this is?

(The common name relates to cats)



The Townsville Shell Club Annual
Shell Show is on 17th to 18th July 99

Whitsunday Shell Club, Swap and Buy
10th April, call Annette 07 49561708

Melbourne Shell Show 24th to 26th July

The Keppel Bay Shell Show is on
10th to 11th July 99

Fort Dennison Low tides, especially for
Chris (summer time):

Sat 27 th Feb	1345	0.3
Sun 28 th Feb	1431	0.3

1st Mar to 4th Mar, all good

Sun 14 th Mar	1430	0.3
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15th Mar to 19th Mar, as low as 0.2

Sat 20 th Mar	1718	0.2
Sun 21 st Mar	1803	0.3

Answer: Tellina linguafelis (cat's tongue)